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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fourth Human West Nile Virus Case in Milwaukee County
State Department of Health Reports Fourteenth Wisconsin Case to Milwaukee Health Department

The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) received notification from the State Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) today of the fourth probable human case of West Nile (WN) virus in Milwaukee County. The infected individual is an 80 year-old woman that was diagnosed with viral encephalitis and is currently hospitalized. This woman has received only supportive care to date and her condition is reportedly improving. She is a resident of the city of Milwaukee as have been the three previous cases. No further information regarding the identity or other personal information of the patient or her medical care will be released at this time by the Milwaukee Health Department.

WN virus is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes acquire the infection when they bite birds carrying the disease. The MHD has received over 2300 dead birds reports in 2002. The numbers of reports have been declining since a peak in early to mid August. The City of Milwaukee has applied mosquito larvicide to over 21,000 catch basins and Milwaukee County is in the process of treating ponds and lagoons to help control mosquito populations.

The State DHFS has reported 14 human cases of West Nile Virus in Wisconsin so far in 2002. To avoid West Nile virus infection in areas where the virus has been detected in birds or other animals, public health officials recommend the following:

- Use mosquito repellant containing DEET when outdoors during peak periods of mosquito activity between dusk and dawn
- Wear long sleeve shirt and long pants when outdoors during peak mosquito activity
- Repair screening of door and windows which may provide unwanted entry of mosquitoes
- Eliminate areas of standing or stagnant water in and around the home (flower pots, buckets, cans, clogged rain gutters, wading pools, bird baths, tires, etc.)

For more information on West Nile virus call the City of Milwaukee Health Department at 286-3521 or call the State Department of Health and Family Services West Nile Virus Hotline at 1-800-433-1610.

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